

**2015 Regional Office Annual Report**

**UNICEF Latin America & the Caribbean Regional Office  
(LACRO)**



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## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APR	A Promise Renewed
BP	Business Plan
C4D	Communication for Development
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CECC-SICA	Central American Cultural and Educational Coordination - Central American Integration System
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEES	Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales
CELAC	Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños
CEPREDENAC	Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CICIG	Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala
CLADE	Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education
COs	Country Office(s) [UNICEF]
COAR(s)	Country Office Annual Report(s)
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DaO	Delivering as One
DRP	Data, Research and Policy
ECD	Early Child Development
DRR	Disaster Risk and Reduction
ECE	Early Childhood Education
CLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EMTCT	Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GEROS	Global Evaluation & Research Oversight System
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSSC	Global Shared Services Centre
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IATF-NCD	Interagency Task Force on Non Communicable Diseases
IB	Institutional Budget
IBE	Intercultural and Bilingual Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICMEC	International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan
INCAP	Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
IP/NO/GS	International Professional / National Officer / General Services
IPV	International Papillomavirus Society
JCC	Joint Consultative Committee
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACRO	UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
MICS	Multi-indicator cluster surveys
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity System
MNCH	Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

MTR	Mid-term Review
NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NYHQ	New York Headquarters [UNICEF]
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIM	Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (International Organisation for Migration)
OOSCI	Out-Of-School Children Initiative
OR	Other Resources
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PANCAP	Pan Caribbean Partnership
PCI	Payment Card Industry
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PFP	Private Fundraising and Partnerships
PFV-GVA	Private Fundraising - Geneva
PIDB	Programme Information Database
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RCM	Regional Conference on Migration
RELAF	Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar (Latin American Network for Family-Based Care)
RET	Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust
RMT	Regional Management Team
RO	Regional Office
ROMP	Regional Office Management Plan
RR	Regular Resources
RRRR	Regional Rapid Response Roster
RTF	Regional Thematic Fund
SAMOA	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SCA	Statistical Conference of the Americas
SCPC	Southern-Cone Processing Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SSC	South-South cooperation
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDG-LAC	United Nations Development Group- Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMSDF	UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WG	Washington Group
WHO	World Health Organization

# Part 1: Overview

## 1.1. Executive Summary

During 2015, the Regional Office concentrated its efforts on the provision of technical assistance to country offices, ensuring quality assurance and oversight of country programmes, and providing strategic representation of UNICEF in regional- and sub-regional events and conferences.

Important achievements included: 1) increased political commitment and programmatic attention to addressing the high levels of violence against children in the region, particularly in Central America and in the Caribbean; 2) sustained growth of Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) income in nine countries in the region to US\$ 58,841,217 (representing a 15 per cent increase compared to 2014, despite the US dollar appreciation vis-a-vis local currencies in several countries). The source of this growth is identified as derived mainly from the 600,195 individual pledge donors in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); 3) consolidation and increased integration of technical support to country offices, in close collaboration with Headquarters (including through a 'compact' with the programme division), with a special focus on management for results, enhancing knowledge management, gender mainstreaming and HACT; 4) the contribution of LAC to the start-up of the Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC) in Budapest by testing business processes and providing staff support; and 5) the implementation, together with the Field Results Group (FRG) in Headquarters, of the initiative for streamlining business processes for small country offices, aimed at increased efficiency and effectiveness and limiting staff time on internal processes.

On the other hand, some shortfalls included: 1) limited progress in advancing multi-country initiatives, despite efforts in the Caribbean, the Amazon and Central America; 2) difficulty in sustaining political attention and financial resources to protect the rights of unaccompanied migrant children; 3) the need to strengthen the programme focus on a limited set of priorities in some countries; and 4) inadequate training for staff, including managers, to use new, complex internal management tools.

In order to advance the achievement of results for children and fulfil the UNICEF mandate, strategic partnerships were broadened and sustained. These include: 1) the Latin American Chapter of the Global Movement for Children, particularly in addressing violence against children; 2) the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to generate evidence and create political leverage in social protection, gender analysis, investment in children, multi-dimensional measurement of child poverty, and in obtaining age- and sex -disaggregated statistics through the Statistical Conference of the Americas organised by ECLAC; 3) the UN agencies, to enhance effective collaboration and joint actions through the roll-out of Delivering as One (DaO) and related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and the mentoring of UN Resident Coordinators by the Regional Director in the design of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework for the English- and Dutch-speaking countries of the Caribbean, and 4) the private sector, aiming at a greater attention to child rights and business principles, for example by working with the tourism sector in preventing child sexual exploitation and with the food and beverage industry to counter child overweight and obesity.

LAC country programmes include results aligned to what is considered to be the ‘core business of UNICEF in LAC’. This includes: monitoring the situation of children and implementation of CRC and CEDAW recommendations, and influencing national policies combined with modelling at provincial/municipal level. This role is relevant in all countries, including upper-middle and high-income countries, thereby reaffirming the importance of the universal presence of UNICEF.

The programmatic role of UNICEF in LAC is evolving to address emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, such as: a) non-communicable diseases and their related risk-factors (such as overweight and obesity) as well as gender-responsive adolescent health – including the prevention of adolescent pregnancy; b) integrated and inclusive early childhood development; c) secondary education, with a particular attention to identified at-risk groups such as out-of-school boys and indigenous children; d) growing levels of (armed) violence against children and unaccompanied migration, and; and e) sexual exploitation and violence against girls.

In the context of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan, it is strongly recommended these emerging issues are included, along with the following strategies: a) behavioural change communication (C4D) to address social norms; b) South-South Cooperation to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda; c) knowledge generation and management, including evaluation of national policies and normative/legislative frameworks, rather than focusing mainly on UNICEF supported programmes.

Finally, many country programmes are highly dependent on income from the PFP generated Regional Thematic Fund, Global Thematic and Set-Aside funding, in addition to Regular Resources (RR) allocations. In spite of limited budgets, UNICEF in LAC continues to deliver results and address persisting inequities in the region. Therefore, as part of discussions regarding a potential new resource allocation system, it is recommended that the current minimum levels of RR are maintained with adjustments to the allocation criteria of locally- raised, thematic and set-aside funds. These adjustments would serve to have a more equitable distribution such resources to ‘donor-orphan’ countries, several of which are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **1.2.Trends and progress in the region, affecting children and women**

The year 2015 was characterized by an economic deceleration of the region, which suggests that the economic foundations in LAC are not as robust as expected.<sup>1</sup> The highest reductions in growth took place in South American countries (i.e. Brazil and Venezuela), while certain Central American and Caribbean countries continued with remarkable economic performance (namely Panama, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua). The Caribbean sub-region experienced a heterogeneous growth, but above 1 per cent of GDP on average. Low commodity prices have considerably affected exporting countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. Lastly, the financial volatility at the beginning of the year is considered another barrier that delayed economic activity, shrinking investment to emerging markets and contributing to the dollar’s appreciation.

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<sup>1</sup> Latin American Economic Outlook 2016: Towards a new partnership with China (OCDE, 2015).

The major economic trend affecting children in 2015 was considered to be the reduction in public spending of about 0.4 per cent of GDP on average<sup>2</sup>, which becomes especially relevant in countries where the decrease has been primarily in social investment. For example, the economic recession in Brazil resulted in rising unemployment and a devaluation of the currency which places the country's capacity to continue social investments in a precarious position.

Sustaining social gains and increased social investment achieved over the past years, as a result of the positive economic climate, posed a challenge in 2015 and is predicted to remain so in the coming years. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the need to address the persisting inequities within countries has become more visible than before. While several countries observe improved child rights indicators, others face worsening development indicators (e.g. Guatemala and Haiti). Disparities within countries are often exacerbating, affecting particularly children from Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, who suffer disproportionately from poverty and discrimination. This is also the case for children living in slum areas at the margins of urban centers. Such inequities are often exacerbated by harmful gender norms, with differing impacts on girls and boys from different socio-cultural groups. This complex reality reinforces the continued need to address inequities and promote inclusive- and universal social policies.

Legislative elections in Haiti, delayed since 2011, took place in August. Widespread violence at polls forced Haitians to cast votes again for a majority of the legislature on the same day they voted for a new president in October. The runoff election between the two presidential frontrunners has yet to take place, whilst violence and protests continue to escalate. The potential deportation by the Dominican Republic of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, including children, added to Haiti's concerns.

Peace talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) reached an agreement for moving closer to a peace deal with an announced deadline for signing a peace accord on 23 March 2016. An end to the conflict will probably have a significant impact on children in Colombia, hopefully through a reduction in internal displacement and violence and an increase in access to social services for populations that have been directly affected by the conflict. The peace agreement should take into account transitional justice issues as they pertain to children and will need to address the demobilization issue of children who have been involved in the armed conflict.

Along with Mexico, the Northern Triangle Countries of Central America continue to endure very high levels of armed violence, with tens of thousands of children from these countries continuing to migrate clandestinely to the USA. Mexico has tightened its southern border and detained more than 30,000 Central American child migrants, many unaccompanied. In addition to the ongoing violence in Mexico, the persistence of (gang related) violence puts El Salvador and Honduras at the top of the list of countries with the highest murder rates in the world. The level of violence in Guatemala, as well as in many cities in other Latin American countries (particularly in Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia), continues to be very high.

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<sup>2</sup> Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL, 2015).

Significant changes to the legal framework related to children's rights in 2015 included the prohibition of marriage of all persons under 18 in Guatemala and a legal ban on all forms of corporal punishment against children in Peru (now the ninth country in Latin American to prohibit all corporal punishment of children in all settings, including the home). UNICEF is advocating for much-needed legal reforms on these aspects in other countries in the region in partnership with international NGOs, such as Save the Children, Plan, ChildFund and others. Moreover, sustained advocacy is needed to achieve a reduction in the age of criminal responsibility in several countries in the region.

### **1.3.Humanitarian Assistance**

Over the course of 2015, many countries in LAC experienced one or more relatively small, often localized emergencies, which affected millions of people. Most of these emergencies never made it to regional, or global headlines but still required some level of UNICEF response, including through the newly established Regional Rapid Response roster and implementing new SOPs for response in the first days after an emergency. At the same time, access to humanitarian funding became even more restricted given the many level 3 emergencies in other regions.

Effects of the El Niño phenomenon have been strongly felt in the Region, particularly in the “dry corridor” of Central America. UNICEF's efforts, along with its regional partners, to better interpret the implications of the persisting drought in the sub-region, have led to a more coordinated and holistic response framework. This is also a sub-region suffering from very high levels of (armed) violence. It is reported that migration trends, within Central America and towards the USA, are also affected by these twin dynamics of drought and violence. Also in 2015, the migration of significant numbers of unaccompanied children continued with few signs of abating.

Increasingly, the effects of El Niño are also becoming evident in other parts of the region, with Colombia and the Caribbean (including Haiti) experiencing unusual drought, while the Southern Cone is seeing heavy rainfall and flooding.

UNICEF LACRO continued with its efforts to develop a more robust programmatic response around climate change which is closely linked to UNICEF's contribution to the implementation of the 2030 agenda as well as the outcomes of the Sendai Conference on disaster risk reduction and the World Humanitarian Summit. Sub-regional intergovernmental organizations are increasing their engagement towards disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action which provides a platform for advocacy and common action but also for addressing newly recognized challenges, such as children with disabilities in emergencies.

While access to humanitarian funding from traditional donors is restricted, UNICEF experienced stronger interest from the private sector for humanitarian response in the region. UNICEF LACRO also continued exploring opportunities for facilitating South-South Cooperation between LAC countries in this area, for example, in the dissemination of protocols and best practices.

During 2015, UNICEF regional and country offices helped to position child rights in the policy discussions in the regional Disaster Risk and Reduction (DRR) platform, the Sendai global meeting and in the World Humanitarian Summit regional consultations. At the same time, UNICEF worked closely with the Centre for the Coordination of Disaster Prevention (CEPREDENAC) and national institutions



in raising attention to the rights of children living with disabilities in emergency situations and on the development of protocols in this regard.

UNICEF LACRO also strengthened risk-informed programming by introducing new tools for preparedness and response, such as the INFORM risk assessment tool. Roll-out of such tools will also contribute to further integration of emergency preparedness and response related actions to become an integral part of the work of all UNICEF supported programmes and not as a stand-alone humanitarian response.

Finally, the Zika virus, which emerged in the last quarter of the year in Brazil, is rapidly spreading to the entire region. This outbreak, which is assuming epidemic proportions, is causing serious concern to governments in LAC region and throughout the world, due to its circumstantial association with birth defects (microcephaly) and neurological syndromes (Guillaume-Barre') and socio-political challenges to the provision of universal comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents and adult women. UNICEF has been supporting the MoH in Brazil in its response, and is gearing up to support other governments in the region, in coordination with PAHO/WHO, to respond to this emerging threat.

## **1.4. Mid Term Review of the Strategic Plan**

LAC country programmes include results aligned to what is considered to be the 'core business of UNICEF in LAC'. This includes: to monitor the situation of children and implementation CRC and CEDAW recommendations, and influence national policies. Where appropriate and possible, this work is complemented with the implementation of model projects at the sub-national level (e.g. provinces and municipalities), particularly in areas where the most disadvantaged populations live. This role is relevant in all countries, including upper-middle and high-income countries, thereby reaffirming the importance of the universal presence of UNICEF. A further emphasis on the combination of 'upstream' policy work together with sub-national level modelling, also in the context of middle-income countries, seeks to generate learning and evidence from the local level, which can then be used to inform and influence national level policies and programmes.

The programmatic role of UNICEF in LAC is evolving to address emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, such as: a) non-communicable diseases and their related risk-factors (such as overweight and obesity) as well as gender-responsive adolescent health – including the prevention of adolescent pregnancy; b) integrated and inclusive early childhood development; c) secondary education, with a particular focus on identified, at-risk groups such as out-of-school boys and indigenous children; d) growing levels of (armed) violence against children and unaccompanied migration; e) sexual exploitation and violence against girls, and f) diverse gender identities, inequalities and patterns in childhood and adolescence. Moreover, it is suggested that the PIDB coding be reviewed to adequately reflect these emerging programme issues. This will also allow UNICEF to improve reporting on resource allocation and programme results.

Several programmes have identified, as part of their barrier and bottleneck analysis, the need to systematically identify and address social norms, therefore requiring a component of behavioural change communication (C4D). This is currently not a specific strategy in the Strategic Plan, but is

suggested as a core UNICEF strategy. This will also allow us to better reflect and report ongoing C4D efforts.

At the same time, South-South Cooperation (SSC) is ongoing amongst countries in the region, and beyond. Based on the 2030 Agenda, and the evolving changes in the aid environment, it is expected that the development of this strategy will continue to increase. In order to better demonstrate UNICEF's added-value in obtaining specific results for children through SSC, it is recommended that greater efforts be made, also as part of the MTR of the Strategic Plan, to develop global tools for measuring the results of SSC. Linked to SSC is the need to strengthen the UNICEF knowledge management function. Although efforts are being made at the CO-level in this regard, it is recommended that global efforts are increased to strengthen this function, including increased emphasis on supporting evaluation of (sub-) national government policies and programmes rather than focusing mainly on UNICEF supported programmes.

## Part 2: Analysis of programme strategies and results: Development Effectiveness

*Development effectiveness refers to activities intended to support the attainment of programmatic results, rather than directly contributing to a result. Most of development effectiveness activities of the Regional Office take the form of technical assistance, quality assurance and oversight to country offices, to strengthen their performance in achieving results as defined in their respective country programmes.*

As part of the greater emphasis on **management for results and strategic planning**, UNICEF LACRO strengthened its technical assistance to, and quality assurance of, the design and implementation of country programmes (CP). Extensive support was provided to the preparation of new CP through the organisation of Strategic Moments of Reflection, peer review meetings, in-country missions by (teams of) regional advisors and support from NYHQ, as stipulated in the Compact agreed upon between LACRO and Programme Division. This 'compact' consists of a list of joint activities, as well as strategic planning support to COs. To strengthen results based management, LACRO supported the design of Theories of Change, including the definition of output statements that could be better attributed to UNICEF. In many instances, this required the re-introduction of the modelling concept as part of country programmes that had gradually moved away from such approaches and mostly focused upstream on influencing national policies and programmes.

LACRO actively engaged in discussions on the rollout of the UN DaO and related SOPs. Support and orientation were provided to COs in engaging in DaO and SOPs implementation. This is of particular importance for the 12 country offices presenting new CPDs to the Executive Board in 2015 and 2016. In the Caribbean, LACRO took an active role in the design of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) in the English and Dutch speaking countries of the Caribbean, for which the Regional Director was charged with mentoring the five UN Resident Coordinators in this sub-region. Joint Theories of Change were formulated (life-long learning, justice and safety for children, and social protection & child rights monitoring) for the four UNICEF supported (multi-) country programmes in the Caribbean. A common results framework and indicators (in addition to country specific results) will allow for harmonised reporting towards the UNMSDF results.

Additional multi-country initiatives have also been developed for CPs covering the Amazon Basin and Central America. The multi-country Amazon strategy aims to bring more coherence to CPs that are addressing the rights of indigenous children, as well as to access funding mechanisms of traditional and emerging donors engaged in protecting the Amazon forest and its inhabitants. The multi-country approaches in Central America aim at providing a coordinated response to child migration (to North America) as well as at preventing (armed) violence against children.

LACRO notes that, based on new guidance, the role of the Regional Office increasingly includes a higher emphasis on exercising regional oversight over the implementation of country programmes. In order to obtain better reports from COs, LACRO began an improvement initiative for the adequate application of PIDB-coding. This has also allowed the identification of 10 regional programme priorities common to a majority of the CPs in the region. Aggregated results on these 10 priorities could be reported in the future. LACRO has also established a dedicated post for supporting HACT

implementation and oversight, and to provide technical support in the implementation of HACT and Civil Society Organization (CSO) policy and procedures.

In coordination with the FRG, LACRO started an initiative for streamlining business processes for small COs, aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative processes, in order to allow staff to have more time to work with partners to deliver on results. To this end, business processes were analysed in 4 pilot COs (Belize, Costa Rica, Peru and Uruguay). Recommendations for efficiency gains were made, which could also apply to larger offices. It was found that COs often establish additional controls than the minimum requirements, aiming at avoiding risks rather than managing them. In December, a workload survey was conducted among all staff in the region in order to contribute to improving management practices in all COs, particularly in the small ones.

An analysis of MoRES mainstreaming highlighted that many CPs are using the determinants framework to identify major barriers and bottlenecks. However, only few offices are substantially involved in level-3 monitoring and the bottlenecks identified are often related to the enabling environment, which generally requires longer-term policy support and changes in normative and legislative frameworks and social norms. Therefore, the application of MoRES in upper and middle-income countries would need to be reviewed.

Over the course of 2015, LACRO strengthened its work on monitoring the situation of children. Technical assistance on MICS household surveys was provided to 10 countries. Increasingly, the responsibility of financing such surveys lies with governments, while UNICEF provides quality assurance and technical assistance, as well as evidence-based advocacy to ensure that MICS data and statistics (internationally comparable and sex, age and ethnic -disaggregated where possible) are used by national authorities for evidence based decision-making with an equity lens. LACRO also provided technical assistance and quality assurance to 13 COs in the preparation of equity focused country situation analyses. A total of 21 SITAN documents were produced or are being finalised. LACRO considers the SITAN as a country programme output rather than just an input to programming.

As part of the increased emphasis on addressing violence against children in LAC, a data analysis was carried out on the prevalence of the various dimensions of violence. This initial analysis, which was presented at the Regional Management Team meeting in April, highlighting the need to fill the many data gaps still existing on this topic.

In **Health**, while maintaining attention to pending health challenges in selected countries in the region (such as neonatal mortality and inequities), progress was made in integrating emerging issues in new country programmes. This includes, among others, increased attention to Adolescent Health, NCD, including risk factors such as overweight and obesity, and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS). Technical assistance was provided to all COs on the implementation of global and regional strategies and initiatives. With GAVI funds, support was provided to Haiti in EPI activities, to Cuba, Honduras and Nicaragua for Joint Appraisals, and to other COs for IPV introduction. Guidance was provided on accessing funding opportunities, leveraging resources (e.g. neonatal alliances, closer collaboration with PAHO, the World Bank and IADB) and expanding partnerships.

In relation to **HIV and AIDS**, as part of the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission Initiative (EMTCT), technical assistance was provided to seven countries (Guatemala, Colombia, Guyana, Barbados, and Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic) for assessment and preparation of reports,

while Suriname was supported to successfully apply for EMTCT funding. Cuba, which achieved official certification of EMTCT, was supported through technical review of validation tools and guidelines. The global 'All In' movement, aiming at ending the HIV spread among adolescents, was launched in three countries (Jamaica, Haiti and Brazil) with technical and financial support from LACRO. Technical and financial support for preventing the spread of HIV among adolescents was also provided to Brazil, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Suriname, Guatemala and Belize.

LACRO capacity in **WASH** was reinforced with the appointment of a WASH specialist. Technical assistance was provided to selected countries in implementation of WASH policies and programmes as well as for addressing WASH in emergencies. This included support to Haiti and the Dominican Republic on the cholera epidemic and to Central America and other countries in the region for attending the implications of the El Niño phenomenon.

In **Nutrition**, LACRO focused on two aspects: 1) nutrition response in emergencies, and 2) implementation of country-specific nutrition strategies. Three sub-regional support groups were established in order to provide technical assistance across the region. Three countries were supported in the development of humanitarian response plans and Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) appeals. The implementation of nutrition strategies was reinforced in six COs (Haiti, Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Colombia). Ecuador received technical assistance, in cooperation with PAHO, to implement a Landscape Analysis of the nutrition situation. The fast growing burden of obesity and overweight has started to receive increased attention from LACRO and COs.

LACRO's work on integrated and inclusive **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** focused on three areas. First, support was provided to selected COs for defining national policies and programmes and strengthening and evaluating initiatives aimed at expanding and improving services for children 0-3 years old and their families. Two additional offices received support for implementing ECD within social protection systems. Second, technical assistance was provided to three COs in developing national strategies to expand and improve preschool education services. Third, together with Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust (RET) and Plan International, an online training on humanitarian response was developed, to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF and government staff of eight countries in ECD in emergencies. Two COs (Honduras and Chile) received support to include Education and ECD components in their emergency response.

In **Education**, LACRO support focused on improving access to and the quality of (lower) secondary education. Technical assistance on this topic was provided to seven country offices. Linked to these efforts, the Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI) was further rolled out in four countries (Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay and Costa Rica), thereby contributing to the evidence base for identification of instruments required to enrol children at the right age (including in ECD), keep them in school, and facilitate their transition to secondary education. Technical inputs were provided on Intercultural and Bilingual Education (IBE) in eleven countries, teachers' education initiatives in four countries, and education for children with disabilities.

Three COs (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) were supported in identifying innovative education practices and strategies to reduce violence and improve the learning environment in schools exposed to contexts of armed violence. On this same issue, LACRO, in cooperation with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), involved seven country offices (Guatemala,

El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Guyana, Ecuador and Honduras) in the “Better Programming initiative/ Local capacities for peace”.

As part of the growing attention paid to **Child Protection**, LACRO assisted individual COs in their programming processes. Five countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Paraguay, and Dominican Republic) were included in the global programme to tackle online child sexual exploitation. The sub-regional conference for South America, organized in collaboration with International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) and INTERPOL, demonstrated a growing commitment to this emerging agenda. The partnerships established by LACRO with academic institutions, other UN agencies and CSO are enhancing the capacity of countries to address other key child protection issues such as migration, alternative care (for children in residential care), legislation on minimum ages (marriage, employment, sexual consent and criminal responsibility). Ecuador and Mexico shared lessons learned from the process of raising the minimum age for marriage at an International Seminar in Guatemala, which led to the change in the Guatemalan legislation that increased the legal age from 14 to 18 years.

Sustained efforts to ensure a coherent and multi-sectoral response to address violence against children are observed within country programmes. The Break the Silence multi-country initiative (Eastern Caribbean countries) aiming at addressing sexual violence gained attention during the Secretary General’s visit to CARICOM, generating momentum to intensify advocacy and bring the initiative to policy makers. A comprehensive scorecard to monitor progress towards CRC and CEDAW commitments related to violence against children was finalised. This innovative tool will help in identifying key priorities for legal reforms and in generating evidence and comparative data.

Several COs received technical assistance for addressing child protection in emergencies. LACRO facilitated a secondment from the Swiss Development Agency to coordinate the emergency response after the severe flooding that affected the north of Chile. Support was provided to the Haiti country office to respond to deportations of unaccompanied children from the Dominican Republic.

Extensive technical assistance was provided to almost all COs for to building in-office capacity for programming on **Social Inclusion**. It is increasingly understood that the work undertaken by CO social policy staff will need to contribute to analyses and actions for improving the enabling environment and the integration of cross-cutting social inclusion activities in order to contribute to delivering results for children in sector specific programmes.

Country offices benefitted from LACRO technical assistance in developing analysis and advocacy tools on public investment for children. Support was provided to multi-dimensional child poverty measurement in five COs (Honduras, Paraguay, Panama, Argentina and the Eastern Caribbean) and progress was made in influencing Government counterparts to start measuring child poverty with a multidimensional approach to monitor the related target (on poverty reduction) of the Sustainable Development Goals (Peru, Trinidad and Tobago). Assistance was also provided to Colombia, Peru, Honduras and Haiti in aspects related to local governance, aiming at policy advocacy and action for children’s rights at the municipal level.

As part of ongoing work to strengthen evidence of impact of UNICEF ‘upstream’ work, LACRO supported the further elaboration of selected Equity Case Studies. Four of such cases (Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Guyana-Suriname) resulted in high quality examples of impact-level

results derived from UNICEF contributions. LACRO produced two blog posts on investment in children and set up a [Social Policy Knowledge Hub](#) linked to the global hub. The blogs served to highlight UNICEF social policy work both internally and externally, while the hub aims to contribute to knowledge exchange on social policy between COs. A Facebook page ([PRISMA LAC](#)) was launched to showcase inclusion and equity aspects of social policy for children in LAC from different sources. With a dedicated staff member on Knowledge Management within the social inclusion team, such efforts will be continued and expanded.

In **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Risk Reduction**, COs were supported to improve their emergency response and preparedness capacity in more systematic ways, enhancing their contribution to national policies and plans, thereby increasing attention to children's rights in humanitarian situations. Contingency planning processes were reinforced through capacity development and implementation of simulation exercises in Ecuador, Chile, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua while another four countries received tailored trainings. In order to ensure a more rapid and efficient response to emergencies in the region, LACRO has established a Regional Rapid Response Roster (RRRR). Staff included in this roster are available, when requested, for deployment within 48 hours. Over the course of 2015, RRRR deployments were implemented in three emergency situations (Eastern Caribbean, Ecuador and Chile). Additionally, at least six COs were supported in their emergency response through technical assistance, stock procurement, preparation of Humanitarian Response Plans, and CERF proposals.

To strengthen the preparedness for and response to the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, LACRO and country offices developed a situation analysis and plans to mitigate against, and respond to, emerging needs in Central America, South America – including the Andean region. For this purpose, support was provided to the development of national contingency plans and interagency responses. Funding and technical assistance was provided to seven of the countries most affected by El Niño. However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that countries cannot continue to respond with humanitarian assistance alone. Structural changes and major investments in development policies and programmes are needed to improve the resilience of systems and communities.

In **communication**, LACRO focused on the rollout of the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy. COs were assisted in the preparation of country specific communication strategies which include digital media to engage the general public and the youth (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube). Dedicated capacity was established within LACRO for supporting digital communications at country level. As part of this line of work, Representatives from COs shared experiences and views through social media (Lacathon) during the RMT. Adolescents living with HIV participated in a Twitter takeover. Protocols for communication in emergencies and reputational crises were produced and a regional roster has been put in place.

LACRO, with support from PD and DOC, is paying increasing attention in addressing social norms and in monitoring and evaluation of communication for development (C4D) initiatives. Additional efforts were made to further the inclusion of C4D strategies in new country programmes, particularly in Colombia, and also in addressing violence against children in Central America. New strategic communications partnerships were established with three organizations: 1) CNÑ for the production of special reports on children's rights; 2) the Sesame Street (?) Workshop on a multi-country multi-year partnership to promote healthy habits in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico; and 3)

Stand-Up Mobile for a regional campaign to raise awareness of operators on online security for children. The campaign contributed to the adoption of policies and practices respectful of children's rights by two of the three largest mobile operators in LAC and raised awareness of 400 mobile companies on the importance of child rights.



## Part 3: Analysis of programme strategies and results: Global and Regional Programme

*Where development effectiveness (see part 2) focuses on regional office support to country offices in UNICEF programme areas (such as health, HIV and AIDS, nutrition and WASH), the Global and Regional Programme (GRP) refers to contributions to each of the Strategic Plan's seven outcomes through global, regional and multi-country initiatives such as A Promise Renewed (APR) and OOSCI.*

### 3.1. Influencing global/regional discourse and policy

Through implementation of the Regional Programme, LACRO contributed to regional and global level policy debates and advocacy, as well as to emerging programming priorities and strategies internally in UNICEF.

After years of work on multidimensional child poverty measurements and related advocacy by LACRO with ECLAC, there is now traction in the region to use this methodology as a reference to measure the SDG target (1.2) to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Furthermore, LACRO provided inputs to the NYHQ discussions on how to use child poverty measurements in the design of policies, budget allocations, targeting of social protection programmes and the formulation of national development plans.

Two major events helped raise the profile of UNICEF work on investment in children: the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Seminar on Public Investment in Children in Quito (Ecuador), with 23 LAC countries present, and a side-event in the Financing for Development (FFD3) conference in Addis Ababa, organized with NYHQ, Ecuador country office and the Government of Ecuador. The Quito Seminar resulted in specific recommendations that will inform UNICEF's future engagement with governments in the region.

A regional consultation was held with the World Bank where key programmatic priorities were discussed, e.g. child poverty and child-sensitive social protection systems, and a closer collaboration with World Bank counterparts was discussed.

The work undertaken with the working group on data for children of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) represents an important step towards obtaining internationally comparable and appropriately disaggregated data on children. The special working group consists of representatives of six National Statistical Offices in LAC and UNICEF LACRO functions as the technical secretariat. Aside from advocating for increased investment in data collection on children, using where possible standardised survey tools such as MICS and ensuring that SDGs with child related indicators are being measured in the region, the work plan of this group has a strong emphasis on strengthening administrative data systems as well as the analysis and dissemination of existing data for all countries in the region.

In cooperation with NYHQ, LACRO hosted a seminar on the role of UNICEF in High and Upper Middle Income Countries to feed the global debate and discussions on UNICEF's next strategic plan 2018-2021 with regard to UNICEF's policy advocacy function –and UNICEF's role generally in such countries.

Engagement with the corporate sector on Child Rights and Business continues to be an important part of UNICEF's work in the region. In this regard LACRO has been working based on an industry sector approach. The main priorities has been working with the industries/sectors of extractive, food and beverage, information and communication technologies, and travel and tourism. These efforts require extensive inter-sectoral collaboration within LACRO as they involve components related to research, policy work and public advocacy. For example, LACRO published, with Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), a regional level study on legislation which regulates the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children. The results of this study were presented to various stakeholders, including the food and beverage industry itself and will be the basis for future UNICEF advocacy.

Work progressed on tracking health inequalities in the LAC region, under the umbrella of the regional A Promise Renewed (APR)-LAC coordination mechanism. LACRO is also an active member of the executive committee of the Regional Working Group and in the Neonatal Alliance, contributing to improved regional coordination on Maternal, New-born and Child Health (MNCH) (demonstrated by the LAC side session during the Mexico Global Maternal Neonatal conference). During 2015, LACRO has engaged extensively in global processes and discussions on the Secretary General's Global Strategy, UNICEF Health Strategy 2016-2030 and UNICEF's role in HSS. Furthermore, LACRO has been instrumental in the global UNICEF discussion on engagement on prevention of NCD and its risk factors (with emphasis on overweight and obesity), and served as the UNICEF representative in the global Interagency Task Force on NCDs (IATF-NCD). For immunization, LACRO was represented in key EPI and IPV meetings, and prepared with PAHO the GAVI Business Plan (BP) for IPV introduction in 2016. The Regional Office is continuously advocating to maintain commitments of Head of States regarding EMTCT using all existing coordination mechanisms: PANCAP/CARICOM, Health Ministers Caucus. LACRO's strong partnerships with PAHO, UNAIDS, PEPFAR and GFATM were instrumental to reach EMTCT goals and support strategy development and validation.

Based on analysis of pending challenges in education, LACRO in cooperation with Central American Cultural and Educational Coordination - Central American Integration System (CECC-SICA) and Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC), launched a Strategy to Improve Secondary Education. A multi-year partnership agreement (2015-2017) was signed with the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) to address discrimination (mainly gender based) in secondary education and the promotion of democracy and a culture of peace. The Global Business Coalition, A World at School and LACRO (in agreement with HQ PD/Edu), launched the Strong Schools and Communities Initiative in a high-level event in New York, aiming to increase awareness of the impact of armed violence on education. The Regional Observatory of Inclusive Education was created by CLADE, UNESCO, ECLAC and LACRO to advocate for the right to education, with a special focus on disadvantaged children and secondary education.

For improving learning results, LACRO and CECC-SICA are updating the sub-regional indicators for out-of-school children and school failure. Also, LACRO organized a Forum on Learning in LAC as part of the *Congreso Pedagogia* in Cuba which allowed UNICEF to reach key non-traditional actors.

The efforts in child protection as part of the Compact with Programme Division are providing opportunities for more structured work on four priority issues (birth registration, violence, juvenile justice and alternative care). In follow-up to the Call to Action to end the placement of children under 3 years of age in residential care, a study of children in mega-institutions was finalized, while another

addressing the institutionalization of children with disabilities was initiated. A model to prevent child abandonment and institutionalization was developed (with RELAF), and several countries are involved in its implementation.

Collaboration was enhanced with the CARICOM child protection task force. As a result, CARICOM has officially requested UNICEF support for developing a regional strategy to end violence against children.

With Save the Children and RELAF, UNICEF supported an assessment of the child protection systems' response to the migration crisis in Central America and Mexico, to provide evidence for advocacy on the treatment of child migrants through a human rights based approach. Following advocacy by LACRO, UNICEF was granted the status of Observer within the Regional Migration Conference (RCM). This status will facilitate UNICEF's work at regional and country levels on child migration, strengthen collaboration with OIM and UNHCR, and should also support resource mobilization for work on migration.

Finally, #WePROTECT - the global initiative to prevent and respond to online child sexual abuse is enabling UNICEF to collaborate with key partners, including ICMEC, INTERPOL, Google and mobile service providers. UNICEF continues supporting the roll-out of the Child Online Protection Industry Guidelines, with global and national partners, creating important momentum on these issues in the region.

### **3.2.Evaluation, Research and Data**

LACRO provided individual feedback documents on the IMEP to all country offices. This feedback included recommendations for more joint knowledge generation amongst country offices. Over the course of the year, IMEP implementation was monitored, particularly for evaluations, country situation analysis, and household surveys where the regional office has specific accountability for quality assurance.

A multi-country evaluation on Early Child Education (ECE) was initiated by LACRO with the aim to analyse the conditions that contributed to a sustainable increase in coverage of ECE services and reduced equity gaps in five countries. It is anticipated that this evaluation, which will be concluded in 2016, will contribute to improved delivery of ECE services in countries in LAC.

LACRO established an outsourced quality assurance service for all UNICEF evaluations in country offices and in the regional office. The services are provided by the '*Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales*' (CEES), a Mexican think-tank. In line with the RO accountabilities established in the UNICEF evaluation policy, CEES has reviewed all draft terms of reference for evaluations as well as draft evaluation reports, based on UNICEF / UNEG evaluation norms and standards. Where required, CEES also provided technical assistance during other steps of the evaluation process. In 2015, this institution has reviewed TORs and evaluation reports from 12 country offices. LACRO also reinforced a mechanism for monitoring the issuing and implementation of evaluation management responses.

So far, these increased quality assurance efforts have resulted in better ratings by the Global Evaluation & Research Oversight System (GEROS) and an improved evaluation performance by LAC as highlighted in the global evaluation dashboard.

### 3.3. Implementation strategies

In 2015, LACRO recruited a dedicated knowledge management specialist for supporting the documentation of tangible results for children achieved through UNICEF supported policy level work in countries in the region. Evidence obtained through research, studies and analyses informed LACRO (policy) advocacy with national- and (sub-) regional governments, institutions and the private sector. This included extensive work, together with ECLAC, on promoting the measurement and reduction of multi-dimensional child poverty as a core component of the SDG agenda as well as advocating for improved investment in children (and better measurement of such investment). Evidence from a study on food and beverage labelling resulted in an increased dialogue with this industry aimed at the promotion of positive health and nutrition habits and the prevention of obesity. Country offices were also supported in the preparation of situational analyses and data collection (such as through Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys).

A broad range of strategic partnerships were sustained and expanded in almost all sectors. This included active participation in UN thematic working groups (e.g. gender, human rights, indigenous populations, maternal health and All In) and joint initiatives with UN-partners. Also the relationship with the World Bank was strengthened through the definition of a joint work plan with tangible products. With the Latin American Chapter of the Global Movement for Children, a lot of work continued in addressing child migration from Central America as well as the prevention of corporal punishment. Other partnerships with key institutions were developed or consolidated around important regional themes (e.g. early childhood development, (secondary) education, violence against children, the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, humanitarian response and corporate social responsibility).

A LACRO mapping of South-South and triangular Cooperation initiatives with UNICEF involvement, as reported in the COARs 2014, revealed that many country offices are actively involved in facilitating this type of cooperation. The regional office worked closely with NYHQ Division of Data, Research and Policy (DRP) and select country offices in defining an SSC framework to better capture the results of such cooperation. Additionally, over the course of the year LACRO facilitated SSC related to humanitarian action and child protection in emergencies.

In terms of the identification and promotion of innovation, LACRO provided orientation to country offices in options for accessing funding for innovation. The regional office supported access to information on the application of RapidFTR as well as U-Report. Also, it supported the design and implementation of EduTrac, a software for identifying out of school children and, in collaboration with NYHQ, disseminated innovative tools for unstructured data collection within the 'Big data' framework.

In line with the QCPR, capacity development continues to be a core strategy for UNICEF's work in the region. As part of the regional programme, LACRO organised several thematic trainings for regional

partners. Moreover, various sectors advanced with a mapping of (sub-) regional centres of excellence and consultants that could support capacity development initiatives at the country level.

Facilitating cross-sectoral work is gaining more attention as country programme results are increasingly of a cross-sectoral nature. LACRO continued a dialogue with country offices to support the increased integration of social policy (e.g. social budgeting, local governance), gender, participation and (disaggregated) data-related work in each of the sectors and on contributing to bigger picture sectoral results, rather than having stand-alone activities and projects.

### 3.4. Normative principles

Further attention was given to monitoring the implementation of strategic priorities of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and advancing with gender equality in LAC. This was also possible as additional financial resources were provided by NYHQ which enabled support to COs in targeted initiatives and also the contracting of a dedicated Gender Advisor (P5 level). Extensive support was provided to country offices to strengthen the gender dimension of programming and advocacy, particularly in the new CP. For this purpose, a baseline with indicators related to the GAP was established for all countries in the region and 4 gender reviews were conducted at the country office level as well as 2 gender mainstreaming trainings in another 2 country offices. A number of initiatives and knowledge generation activities, mostly with strategic partners, helped position the rights of girls in LAC. Such initiatives included, among others, preparation of the SICA sub-regional adolescent pregnancy prevention plan for Central America (with UNFPA, PLAN, PAHO/WHO and World Bank), a study on violence against girls in LAC (with UN Women) and analysis of gender in health policies in South and Central America (with PAHO/WHO). UNICEF also fulfilled an active role in promoting UN inter-agency discussions, particularly through inter-agency thematic working groups, with specific work plans, at regional- and country level to promote GAP principles and, in particular, ending child marriage.

Application of the human rights-based approach to cooperation was reinforced by ensuring that all new country programmes incorporated monitoring the situation of children and women, particularly the most excluded, and the implementation of recommendations of the CRC, CEDAW and other child related international human right instruments, as well as supporting governments in the preparation of periodic reports to these committees. As part of support to COs in the design of the CPs, as well as implementation of mid-term reviews and preparation of situation analysis documents, LACRO continued to provide technical assistance in the application of the human rights-based approach to cooperation through the implementation of specific webinars and in-country technical assistance in all areas.

Focusing on the most excluded and marginalised groups is part of the human rights-based approach. As part of the two RMTs, the regional office organised thematic discussions around violence against children (in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, which is one of the most violent cities in the world) and discrimination (in Panama City, Panama). The latter generated critical reflection on the need to heighten UNICEF's attention to multiple, and often cumulative, forms of discrimination that children and youth may face due to gender and/or ethnic identity, place of residence, socioeconomic level, or other factors. In addition, the RMTs involved field visits to communities, authorities, schools and youth centres, as well as dialogues with experts, government officials, NGOs, and children and youth

representatives on issues of violence and issues of discrimination. To contribute to discussions on violence, the LAC regional office conducted a secondary analysis of the latest census and demographic surveys in selected countries.

Special attention has been given to including the rights of children with disabilities in UNICEF supported programmes in the region. As an initial step, efforts are being made to obtain reliable data on this issue through supporting national authorities in data collection initiatives. This includes the implementation of a module on disability as part of the MICS in Mexico; the piloting in Belize of a new WG/UNICEF model on measuring disability for the next round of MICS; and the adjustments to the national household survey in El Salvador. Specific programming efforts were initiated in other countries. For example, in Paraguay educational materials were adapted for better use by children with disabilities. Through events in the region, LACRO advocated for the inclusion of children with disabilities in policies and programmes, such as inclusive education and sports, and attention to persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. After benefitting from the presence of a Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation Fellow, focusing on the rights of children with disabilities in LAC, the regional office has initiated recruitment of a dedicated staff member for this important issue, funded with RR.

At the regional level, an overview was produced on the status of implementation of CRC recommendations. In close cooperation with headquarters, and under the coordination of Save the Children, LACRO also provided inputs to the CRC General Comment No. 19 on Public Spending and the Rights of the Child (Art 4), which should be published by the CRC in 2016. LACRO has finalized a strategy addressing the rights of girls and boys in the Amazon, where a large portion of children are indigenous. This strategy will hopefully attract funding for (coordinated) efforts of the 8 country programmes that are part of the Amazon basin. This strategy, with country office level action plans, will be presented to donors in early 2016.

The region is moving forward with addressing environmental sustainability and the impact of climate change on children, gradually aligning programming to the related aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals. All LACRO supported activities in emergency preparedness and response – particularly in the WASH sector – have been developed ensuring principles of environmental sustainability. Moreover, resilience building and disaster risk reduction were further integrated into new country programmes (Colombia, Panama and El Salvador) and also included in the design of country programmes that will be presented to the Executive Board in 2016 (with country offices in the Caribbean, also contributing to the SAMOA Pathway and the SIDS agenda). Internally, LACRO also made efforts to ‘green the office’. For this purpose, an analysis with clear recommendations was prepared. As a first step, the air-conditioning system was altered, contributing to less energy consumption. Other related actions will be implemented in 2016.

## Part 4: Management

### 4.1. Management and Operations

Two Regional management team meetings were organised in 2015 (in San Pedro Sula, Honduras and in Panama City, and counted with the participation of several HQ divisions, including PD, PFP, PPD, EMOPS, DRP, IRC, and FRG. In both cases, a part of the meeting was devoted to management and operations.

Preparedness for transition to the GSSC represented a major management priority for LACRO and COs alike. To provide in-country support to the migration process, LACRO Operations staff visited the COs of Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, Southern cone countries and Venezuela. Five staff members of the LAC Panama Hub were deployed to Budapest for the GSSC pilot implementation. With the GSSC now in place, the Hub will gradually evolve into a multi-country service facility to provide support and assistance to small COs which, in most cases, dispose of a reduced staff base (often limited to GS staff) for Operations and HR functions.

Overall, budget implementation has been satisfactory.

The main achievements and shortfalls related to LACRO ROMP and AWP can be summarized as follows:

a) Achievements:

- In September, ten country offices (Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Belize, Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador) and LACRO piloted the migration to the GSSC, being the first batch offices worldwide undertake the transition process. By the end of November, all 24 LAC COs and LACRO had migrated to GSSC.
- Offices managed to operate with minimum disruption during the transition period, with the Panama Hub providing services to small COs which, due to financial limitations, do not count with professional staff in Operations and /or in Human Resources.
- During the pilot phase, LACRO provided regular feedback to GSSC on efficiency and effectiveness and main problems encountered.
- Six COs (Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Southern Cone Processing Centre, Brazil, Costa Rica) migrated to LIGHT. Brazil LIGHT Support Center ensured its implementation in all sub-offices.
- The LACRO ICT team assisted five COs in the selection and induction training of new ICT staff.
- Migration to Cloud structures, implementation of SharePoint Sites for COs and initiation of the LACRO SharePoint Site (to be fully deployed in 2016) were undertaken.

b) Shortfalls:

- Most of the 24 LAC COs (small offices in particular) require continued remote support, thereby stretching to the limit the capacity of the Panama Hub and of the Regional office.
- MyCase tool for GSSC transaction processing is not linked to SAP causing duplicity in work processes and increasing COs' workload.
- Three COs (El Salvador, Costa Rica, Jamaica) had shortfalls in non-post IB. The regional IB envelope for the next budget cycle should be reviewed.
- International Computer Driving License pilot in Panama/LACRO was not completed as planned in 2015 due to the lack of time from staff both in Panama Country Office and Regional Office. It is expected to be finished in 2016.
- In some countries, Business Continuity Plans have not been updated.

- Compliance with payment card industry security standards (PCI) is not assured due to the use of DonorPerfect, (non-PCI compliant and based on an unsecure platform) and the use of payment gateways without compliance with the web hosting security policy. PFP-GVA has been alerted.

Over the year and during the GSSC transition period, LACRO has developed good risk mitigation practices at both RO and CO level:

- Oversight of performance of COs took place throughout the year. Regular management conversations between the Regional Director and Representatives ensured follow up of management indicators and of the 250 recommendations included in the 24 letters related to the 2014 COs' annual reports. Countries risk profiles were revised and recommendations communicated to Representatives.
- Training and technical support was provided to country offices during the year, including personalized support to small offices. Surveys were applied to obtain feedback on the transition process.
- LIGHT Offices no longer dependent on local ICT infrastructure and can operate from anywhere, thus improving business continuity. LACRO hosts DonorPerfect for Venezuela and Chile, thus adding a security layer.
- Stretch assignments provided to Chile, Dominican Republic, Bolivia and Nicaragua COs to address shortfalls in staff or critical situations.
- Regular participation of LACRO management in audit exit meetings, either personally or virtually.

Audit support was provided to five COs during internal and external audits. An analysis of audit recommendations, jointly prepared by Operations and Planning sections, was shared at the RMT and at the Deputy Representatives' meetings. Increasingly, audit recommendations refer to programmatic issues. The most common audit recommendations in the region are related to HACT, partnership management, work planning and results based management.

In Human Resources, three offices were added to the Panama Hub, which is now providing HR services to 11 offices including LACRO. Service level agreements with the hub clients were reviewed to improve quality and timeliness. Assistance and oversight was provided to the recruitment of 86 staff members for COs and the regional office (30 IP, 51 NO, 5GS), including participation in selection panels, CRB reviews and approval process. Given the large number of recruitments and staffing issues, the benchmark for recruiting time was not met (from 76 to 91 days). In cooperation with DHR, the new talent management system (TMS) was piloted in 5 COs. In-country technical assistance on a broad range of HR-related aspects, including linking the staffing structure to country programme results, was provided to 14 COs.

Learning and career development activities were given high priority. The implementation of regional and COs' learning and development plans was supported and monitored and 98 per cent of the learning budget allocated to the region (US\$ 93,986) was spent. Also the induction of new staff members received increased attention, and a new induction programme has been developed on the Agora platform and will be launched in 2016. It includes a learning package and key documentation, as well as an introductory video. Guidelines for stretch assignments were updated, and a total of 22 staff members participated in stretch assignments. Long Term Agreements were signed with two companies for individual coaching and outplacement support.



The collaboration with the Regional Staff Association has been fluid and productive and 3 JCC meetings were held. Aiming at staff well-being and work-life balance, several initiatives were carried out in order to promote a positive work environment. Efforts were made to improve the medical insurance scheme. Ethics and work-life balance trainings were facilitated in 5 COs.

A LAC rapid response roster for emergencies was created and activated three times over the course of the year, contributing to rapid deployment of UNICEF staff to emergency situations.

The following table summarizes in quantitative terms the HR-related activities carried out in the region:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number/Percentage</b>	<b>Break-down</b>
Recruitments	94 SMs	38 IP (8Reps), 51 NO, 5GS
Individual Support to SMs on abolished posts	41 SMs	Out of 72 affected staff members
Ethics On-line training compliance	95%	
Ethics Workshop attendance	135 SMs	26 Honduras, 31 Argentina, 18 Ecuador, 34 Nicaragua, 26 Uruguay
Work life balance training attendance	103 SMs	26 Honduras, 28 Argentina, 18 Ecuador, 34 Nicaragua
Risk mitigation support to COs	14 Country offices	3 External liability issues; 11 Internal liability issues
Meetings on career development and HR issues	122 SMs	14 Nicaragua; 16 Guatemala; 9 Uruguay; 13 Peru; 11 Chile; 6 Argentina; 13 Haiti; 10 Ecuador; 2 Colombia; 10 Barbados; 18 Honduras
SMs participating in the Yammer LAC HR knowledge sharing group	53 SMs	All HR practitioners, including Operations staff doing HR functions.
TRT/PBR review	13 Country offices	
Policy advice/SOP Queries (aprox.)	4200	350 monthly
LAC support to GSSC pilot implementation	26 SMs	5 Panama Hub; 3 Southern Cone Processing Centre; 18 Country Offices (from 14 different country offices)

## **4.2. Special Purpose: Private Fundraising & Partnerships**

In all nine markets supported by PFP investments (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela), the income grew significantly in local currency and it is the first time that all nine country offices demonstrate income grow. The driving force in the growth comes from individual fundraising where well over 100,000 new monthly pledge donors were added. In the region, the total number of active individual monthly donors was 600,915 at the end of 2015.

On the Corporate fundraising side, income is overall growing (in local currency) with the notable exception of Brazil and Mexico, and in spite of the negative impact of the exchange rate (due to the appreciation of the dollar). The current focus has primarily been to use corporate alliances as a

pathway to Pledge, with considerable success. In fact, this has become a regional model and a global priority for PFP.

Engagement with the corporate sector on Child Rights and Business continues to be an important part of UNICEF work in LAC. To this end, LACRO work has been based on an industry sector approach, giving priority to the industries/sectors of extractives, food and beverage, information and communication technologies, and travel and tourism. This approach requires an extensive inter-sectoral collaboration within LACRO, as it includes components related to research, policy work and public advocacy. For example, LACRO published, together with INCAP, a regional level study on the legislation which regulates the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages addressed to children. The results of this study were presented to and discussed with various stakeholders, including the Food and Beverage industry itself.

The income from the private sector fundraising in LAC has been growing steadily, reaching the total amount of US\$ 58,841,217 in 2015, which represents a 15 per cent increase compared to 2014, in spite of unfavourable exchange rates). PSFR has become the largest source of programme funds for the region, being greater than the ten major governmental donors combined. This positive trend partly compensates the departure of traditional donors from LAC. However, the PSFR income is concentrated in the nine investment market countries, while the other 15 COs in the region have not benefited as much. This is a major concern for the Regional Office, which is striving to broaden and strengthen the Regional Thematic Fund. This is a critical issue and requires further attention from, and discussion with, headquarters in New York and Geneva.